

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Sun Printing

Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center

Family Business Gets Lean

Client Profile:

Sun Printing is a family-run commercial printer. Ed Keifer bought the company 55 years ago, and his children now own and are expanding the facility in Wausau, Wisconsin. All the digging and construction hide a bigger transition inside the building. Sun Printing has 31 employees.

Situation:

Sun Printing needed upgraded facilities, better customer parking, and new printing technology to keep pace with customer demand. The old building had too many small rooms that hampered communication and work flow, inventory was crowding usable work space, and equipment layout was less than perfect.

Solution:

Sun Printing developed a close working relationship with advisors from the Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center (NWMOC), a NIST MEP network affiliate. Working out of nearby Northcentral Technical College (NTC), one of five partnering institutions comprising the NWMOC, the Center outlined a plan that began with Lean training for all employees, established priorities through Value Stream Mapping, and culminated with a Lean implementation event.

Lean Training motivated the company to change the way they do business, from production line set up, to inventory turns, to building layout. With the aid of students from NTC to provide CAD drawings, a building expansion was planned and production layout and flow were redesigned. To open up the production area, two walls were removed in the old facility, and a new addition provided even more space. Equipment was moved, two new presses and some smaller equipment were added, and the company abandoned film for computer-to-plate technology.

Lean training provided strategies for building teamwork and eliminating all kinds of waste. "A lot of changes happened internally that no one saw," said Karla Keiffer, one of the owners. "Following the training, our company's internal communication improved; we set standards for job planning and established production lines which eliminated wasted steps and processes. The production changes we've made have already made a big difference," she said.

Results:

- * Increased annual sales by 10 percent.
- * Redesigned production layout and flow.
- * Estimate a cost avoidance of \$300,000 by avoiding 'overbuilding.'
- * Eliminated waste and processes.
- * Improved internal communication.

Testimonial:

www.mep.nist.gov



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"It was probably one of the most exciting four or five months I've had working in this industry. The production changes we've made have already made a big difference."

Karla Kieffer, Owner